



Sierra Club Bulletin

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NEWLY ELECTED DIRECTORS

At the recent annual election the following were elected directors of the Club for the ensuing year: Herbert S. Adair, Virginia Best Adams, William Frederic Badè, Phil S. Bernays, William E. Colby, Ernest Dawson, Francis P. Farquhar, Walter L. Huber, J. N. LeConte, Duncan McDuffie, Marion R. Parsons, Robert M. Price, Chester H. Rowell, Clair S. Tappaan, Payson J. Treat. The regular organization meeting of the Board will be held in the Club Room, 1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco, Saturday morning, May 7, 1932, at ten o'clock, at which time officers for the ensuing year will be elected and such business as may come before the meeting will be transacted.

SECRETARY'S REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP FOR THE YEAR 1931

To the Members of the Sierra Club:

During the year 1931 there were 317 new members admitted to membership in the Club; 203 members were dropped from the list in accordance with the by-laws because of non-payment of dues, 101 resigned, and there were 16 deaths. The total membership at the beginning of the year 1932 was 2,534, as compared with 2,537 at the beginning of 1931. WM. E. COLBY, Secretary.

CAN WE BRING BACK THE SIERRA BIGHORN?

By VERNON BAILEY

Chief Field Naturalist, U. S. Biological Survey

On the 1931 outing of the Sierra Club along the middle High Sierra from Matterhorn and Conness, south to Banner and Ritter, mainly within the Yosemite National Park, but also in the Kern and Mono national forests, many old fragments of heads and horns of the Sierra bighorn were found. One almost perfect cranium, minus the horns and lower jaws, was found on the east face of Banner Peak at 11,000 feet, by Dr. Herbert M. Evans. Most of the relics, however, were merely the heavy bases of skulls with bony horn-cores attached, or fragments of old horns. All were old, probably forty or fifty years at least, and had only remained for this length of time because buried for most of the year in snow and ice.

The skulls or fragments seen on the range, at the ranger station, in Yosemite Museum, and in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, at Berkeley, represented the following localities: Mounts Conness, Dana, Gibbs, Parker, Parsons, MacIure, Lyell, Banner, Ritter, and Alger Lake and Parker Pass. To these localities can be added old records of mountain sheep in Bloody Cañon prior to 1874 (John Muir), and on the east slope of Sonora Pass, near the junction of Alpine, Mono, and Tuolumne counties, in 1876-1878 (Grinnell and Storer). A good skull of an old ram now in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, was said to have been obtained in the mountains east of Crescent Lake, possibly from Gale Peak or Red Top Peak, or maybe from farther east. It is without date or definite locality. These localities carry the original range of the bighorns along the whole eastern part of Yosemite National Park, and the number of localities as well as of specimens and fragments of skulls shows that sheep were once abundant here.

According to reports of the Forest Service, in 1924 there were 30 mountain sheep in the Red State Mountain and Mount Humphreys district, 150 in the headwaters of the Kings River section of the range, and 50 in the Kaweah Peaks country. In *California Fish and Game* for January, 1931, E. H. Ober reported about 200 mountain sheep scattered from the Convict Lake mountains in south-

western Mono County south to northeastern Kern County. This places the nearest living mountain sheep within 25 or 30 miles of the present boundary of Yosemite National Park and agrees with last summer's statements of local ranchmen that they were to be found about 25 miles south of Garnet Lake.

The question naturally arises as to whether these magnificent native animals could be brought back to their original range and given protection that would insure their future abundance in whatever numbers desired. Under present neglect their numbers seem to be and probably are diminishing. If it seems desirable to return them to the rocky peaks, crests, and ridges along the eastern part of the park, which is so admirably adapted to their needs and habits, and where hundreds or thousands of people could see them every summer, it is only necessary to give them intelligent protection until they increase sufficiently to spread back over their old range. But a definite plan must be adopted and followed out, a plan that would apply to many other species and regions and only needs demonstration.

The plan must begin with a close study of these animals on their present range by some competent naturalist who can stay with them all summer, night and day; and then all winter. The sheep breed rapidly, and would normally almost double in numbers each year. Now the increase and a little more is taken each year by some enemies and the first thing is to learn what takes it, whether poachers, coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, eagles, or a combination of all. The man who devotes his time to studying these bighorns should also be able to protect them by eliminating most of their enemies in their vicinity and gradually get so familiar with the habits of the sheep that he can gently influence their choice of range and work some of the bands toward the park. While they probably could not be definitely herded from one peak or ridge to another a slight disturbance on one side could undoubtedly be made to urge them in a definite direction to areas already freed from their destructive enemies. In other words, it seems time for us to take a step ahead in game and wild life management that will leave no more to chance and accident than we would in any other industry. Such close practical studies as have just been reported by Joseph Dixon and George M. Wright on the trumpeter swans in Yellowstone National Park are greatly needed in many of our wild life areas, but nowhere more than with these bighorns.

This plan of restoring the mountain sheep to their original range would require funds for the employment of one man with pack-horse and saddle-horse, and involve moderate field expenses. No final results could be expected before the second or third year, but eventually the work could be perfected so that it could be left in the hands of rangers and local men on the ground. After one year of study it should be possible to capture easily a trio of lambs, a buck and two ewes, to be tamed and placed at some favorable point, such as Merced Lake Ranger Station, to be raised and gradually given their freedom on the steep cañon walls where they would find ideal summer and winter range and could establish a protected colony well within the park. Other colonies could be established later with the experience acquired from this group. Either Pate Valley or Muir Gorge would be a good locality for one colony, and these two would establish the sheep well within the park limits and insure their winter migrations down both the east and west slopes of the mountains. Their winter migrations should eventually reach to Yosemite and Hetch Hetchy valleys as well as down the east slopes of the mountains where their protection has been difficult.

Two thousand mountain sheep in the mountains of Yosemite National Park would not overstock the range nor conflict with other forms of wild life, except for some of the larger carnivores, mainly coyotes, which would necessarily have to be somewhat reduced from their present numbers. The restoration of the bighorns should be of equal interest to the National Park Service, the Biological Survey, the Forest Service, and the California Fish and Game Commission, and could be taken up jointly or individually by them. To be of any value it should be continuous for several years with assurance that the sheep would be permanently protected when re-established.

REPORT OF THE STATE PARK COMMISSION FOR 1931

The following paragraphs, condensed and abridged, are taken from the annual report of the California State Park Commission, William E. Colby, Chairman, rendered to Governor James Rolph, Jr., under date of December 31, 1931.

As in preceding years the efforts of the Commission during 1931 were directed largely toward the acquisition of additional state park areas. . . . Due to the splendid generosity of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and other private citizens who through the good offices of the Save-the-Redwoods

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League, contributed sums of money amounting to millions of dollars and also to gifts of park areas from various counties, all of which donations to the State were matched in value out of state park bond sales, the Commission was able to purchase for the State during the past year, some of the outstanding and most highly prized scenic areas within its borders.

Probably the best known and most desirable areas acquired were the Bull Creek and Dyerville Flat forests of redwoods. . . . On one of the Dyerville Flats the State has acquired what up to the present time appears to be the tallest standing tree in the world which has been definitely measured. This tree attains the tremendous height of 364 feet. By this acquisition the State has acquired one of the most magnificent forests in the entire world. . . . Scientists and lovers of nature the country over are rejoicing in the fact that these incomparable trees have been saved for all time.

Additional areas containing redwood forests have been acquired along the Redwood Highway, notably large additions to the Del Norte Coast Park, this project being now practically complete and extending for six or seven miles along the Redwood Highway, commencing about fifteen miles south of Crescent City. This park is remarkable because this is practically the only place along the entire coast where giant redwoods extend out on the bluffs and forested slopes immediately above the ocean. Here we have magnificent coastal scenery combined with an exceptional forest growth.

One of the major projects originally outlined by the Save-the-Redwoods League is in the vicinity of Prairie Creek extending southerly from the common boundary line of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. Here we have another grove of approximately 6,000 acres of giant redwoods in all of their magnificent perfection. This acquisition was made possible through the generosity of Mr. E. H. Harkness, who contributed upwards of one-half million dollars toward its purchase. While the State has not actually acquired title to this area, the contracts are complete and the sale of the matching bonds has been authorized. Other small areas along the Redwood Highway have been acquired, either by condemnation or purchase, to round out areas already acquired so that the preservation of much of the primeval magnificence of the forest groves along this famous roadway is perpetually guaranteed. The Redwood Highway with its scenic attractions ranks with the great wonders of the world and it is of major importance to all of California that its beauty should be preserved unimpaired. The record of travel on this highway indicates that practically as many residents of southern California as of northern California drive over it in order to enjoy its scenic attractions.

There is probably no single grove of *Sequoia gigantea*—The Big Tree of the Sierra—which is better known or more historic (because it was the earliest of the large groves discovered), than the Calaveras Grove of Big Trees. This is the north of the two main groves. Through the splendid efforts of the Calaveras Grove Association, assisted by the Save-the-Redwoods League, this acquisition was made possible, and the dedication of this grove took place July 5th.

On Lake Tahoe, as a result of matching the generous gift of the Duane L. Bliss heirs and a subsequent contribution by Walter D. Bliss, the Commission was able to purchase a most desirable addition to the Rubicon Point and adjacent acreage, commonly known as Lester Beach. The State has thus acquired approximately 1,200 feet of one of the finest beaches on the entire lake, which makes a most fitting addition to its previous holdings and rounds this out to an extremely desirable park unit, with a total of 610 acres and lake frontage of over two miles.

Mt. Diablo—the outstanding mountain in the vicinity of the Bay Region and which commands a view of the fertile Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys and the High Sierra beyond, and also an area almost equal in extent to the entire State of New York, is being acquired by the purchase of units, under contract with the owners. This purchase has been made possible through the generous act of Contra Costa County in contributing thus far the matching funds. It will require financial assistance from other sources to complete the entire purchase.

Through the generosity of the heirs of former Congressman William Kent, and the directors and stockholders of the Mt. Tamalpais-Muir Woods Railway, the Commission was able to make a very favorable arrangement by which additional lands in the vicinity of Muir Woods and adjacent to the existing Mt. Tamalpais State Park, were acquired, rounding out this project by the addition of desirable parcels of wooded lands, much of which contains a fine stand of redwood. The Commission has also arranged to add two or three small parcels to the existing California State Redwood Park in Santa Cruz County. These are quite desirable from an administrative standpoint.

The Commission has also acquired two fine bathing beaches on Monterey Bay, Santa Cruz County. These beaches are used extensively on holidays and week-ends during the summer time by numerous people from the interior valleys. Sealcliff Beach, lying approximately eight miles south of

Santa Cruz, has an ocean frontage of some 3,100 feet, with parking space; Sunset Beach, having an ocean frontage of 6,600 feet, is south of Seaciff and is about five miles from Watsonville and can be easily reached by residents of the interior valleys crossing the Coast Range through Hecker Pass. The generosity of the Santa Cruz Land Title Company, which contributed one-half of the value of the property, made the acquisition of these beaches possible.

Morro Strand in San Luis Obispo County also has been contracted for and consists of one mile of ocean beach, together with an adequate parking and camping area to serve the beach. In Santa Barbara County the Commission has assisted the County Supervisors in rounding out the park project at Carpinteria Beach by acquiring an additional beach frontage of some 400 feet, making a total of 1,150 feet and parking space adjacent.

In Kern County, with the cooperation of the County Supervisors, an area of some 900 acres is about to be acquired, which will become the home of the remaining herd of Tule elk which were once numerous throughout the San Joaquin Valley. This area will be fenced by the State Fish and Game Commission and administered as a zoological park.

In Los Angeles County, with the cooperation of the County Supervisors, who conveyed to the State a strip of beach for matching purposes, one mile of ocean frontage, which includes what is commonly known as the Gillis Beach, has been acquired. Manhattan Beach, lying about ten miles south of Santa Monica, consisting of a frontage of about 4,300 feet, was also acquired through the cooperation of Los Angeles County. Negotiations are in progress looking to the acquisition of a very desirable park area known as Alamitos beach immediately adjacent to the City of Long Beach at the mouth of the San Gabriel River. If acquired, this property offers exceptional opportunities for recreational development for the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Through the generous gift of Mr. E. L. Doheny the State has acquired approximately one-half mile of beach adjacent to San Juan Capistrano and Doheny Park, in Orange County. Further south in Orange County about 6,000 feet of very attractive beach has been acquired, immediately south of and adjacent to the publicly owned beach of the City of San Clemente. The acquisition of this strip was made possible through the generosity of Mr. H. H. Cotton and associates who contributed one-half of the purchase price.

In San Diego County the State has taken active steps which will result in the acquisition of Silver Strand, a wonderful strip of beach just south of Coronado, bordering on both the ocean and San Diego Bay, three miles of ocean and two miles of bay frontage. The State's bond money for this purchase was matched through the generous action of the Board of Supervisors of San Diego County. The State Park Commission is working on two additional projects for San Diego County. The Borego desert area contains thousands of magnificent specimens of the native fan palm and various kinds of characteristic cacti. The canyons embraced in this proposed area are also renowned for the sculpturing and coloring of their cliffs and rock formations. Mr. George W. Marston and other public spirited citizens of San Diego are assisting in the purchases of lands in the Borego project. The acquisition of a considerable area embracing the summit of Palomar Mountain is also receiving careful consideration.

The Commission secured an option from the Southern Pacific Company for the acquisition of most of the odd-numbered sections embracing Painted Canyon, a short distance east of Mecca in the Mohave Desert. The majority of the even-numbered sections were owned by the Federal Government and have been withdrawn for state park purposes. The consummation of this project requires a contribution of only \$25,000 to match an equal amount of state park bond money, but thus far sufficient interest has not been aroused in this very desirable project to result in a gift for this purpose. It will be regrettable if this area cannot be acquired as contemplated.

The Commission has also allocated provisionally, contingent upon the raising of matching funds, state park bond funds to the following projects:

Additions to Humboldt	Bodega Bay	Additions to Mt. Diablo	San Juan Plaza
Prairie Creek	China Cove	Blue Lake	Fremont Peak
Russian Gulch	General Vallejo Home	Castle Crag	Point Lobos
Alamitos Beach	Huntington Beach		

and others. These are desirable projects and the acquisition of these areas is dependent solely upon the raising of the matching money or satisfactory agreements with the owners of the private lands involved as to the purchase price.

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